

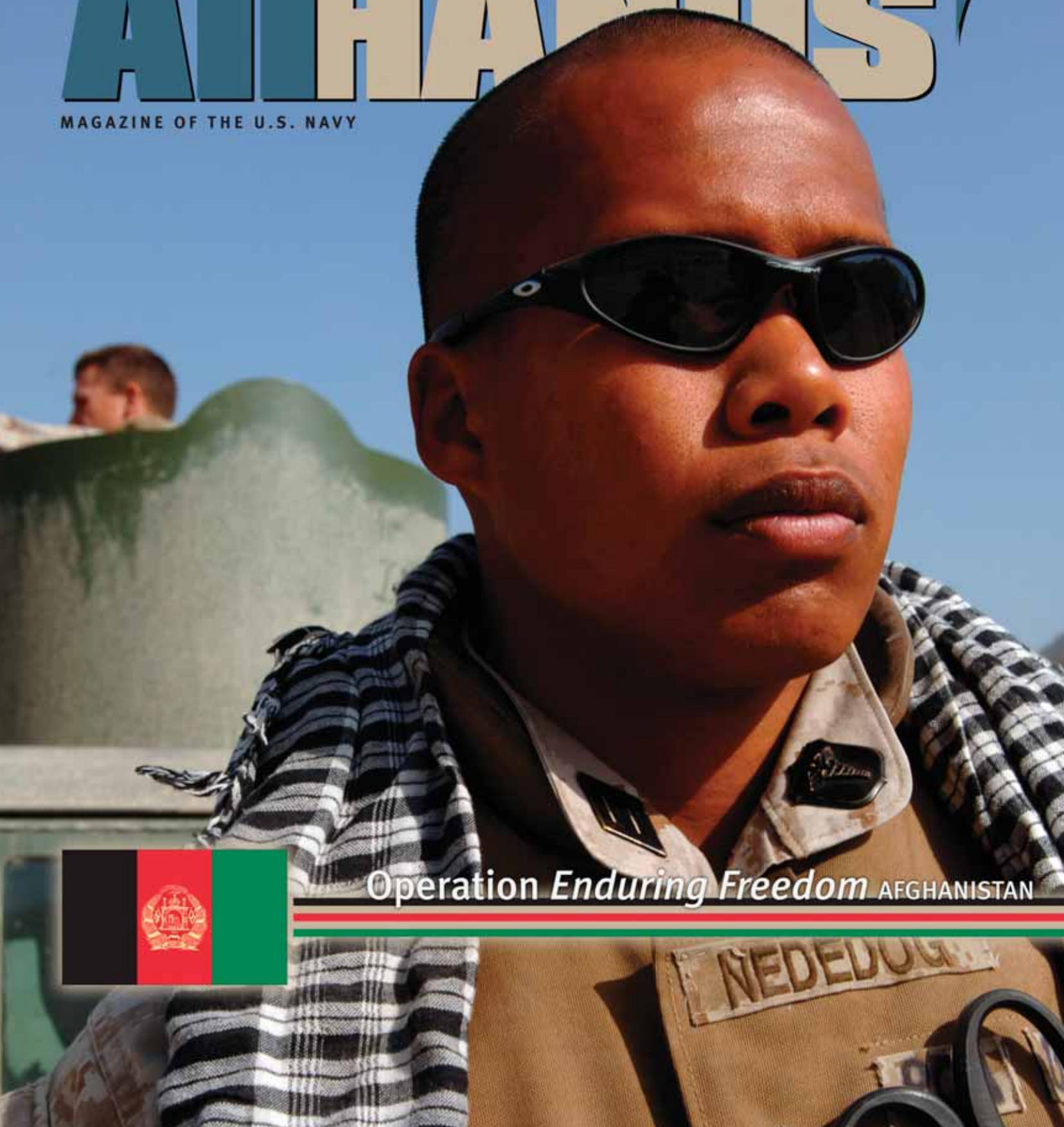
# Navy Mentors in Afghanistan »



July 2006

# Air HANDS

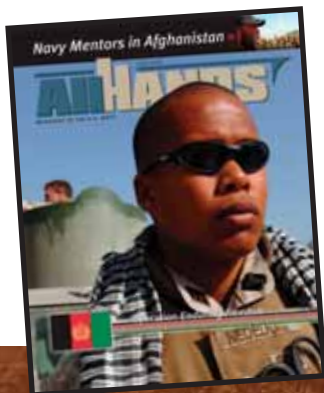
MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY



Operation *Enduring Freedom* AFGHANISTAN

NEDEDUGHA





### [On the Front Cover]

Hospitalman Joseph Nededog sets a security perimeter with his Marines after an improvised explosive device attack in Afghanistan. Nededog is stationed with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Platoon who are providing security for international personnel training the new Afghan Army.

Photo by MC1(SCW/SS) James Pinsky

### [Next Month]

*All Hands* takes to the air with the Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Team and once again ventures into Iraq.

## [Departments]

**Around the Fleet — 6**  
**Focus on Service — 38**  
**History — 40**





# July

## 14 Navy Corpsmen: A Marine's Best Friend

It's what history says corpsmen do – recover from personal injuries and continue to treat Marines. No single rating in the Navy is more decorated for valor than hospital corpsmen, and Marines don't wonder if he will save their lives – they just wonder when.

Photo by MC1(SCW/SS) James Pinsky



## 24 Prowling Afghanistan: Life in an expeditionary squadron

Deep in Asia Minor at Bagram Air Field (BAF), Afghanistan, sit the "Wizards" of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 133, home to more than 200 Sailors and their haze-gray EA-6B *Prowlers* that, without bombs, bullets or missiles, wreak havoc on the enemy during Operation *Enduring Freedom*.

## 30 Landlocked Learning

They repelled the British in 1880. Russia still flinches at the word *Mujahedeen*. And even Genghis Khan looked over his shoulder when he passed through Afghanistan. Nobody needs to teach Afghans how to win wars. But, they'd really like to learn how to keep the peace instead. So when Afghanistan told the world they wanted a professional army, America knew just who to send, Sailors.





The U.S. Naval Academy class of '09 was introduced to the physical and mental challenges of this year's Sea Trials. Modeled after the Marine Corps' 54-hour "Crucible" and the Navy's "Battle Stations," freshmen split into different groups to participate in the grueling five phases of the 11.5-hour event. Evolutions included challenges in an aquatic environment, combat conditioning, teamwork and unit cohesion, land/water obstacles, endurance challenges and the obstacle course.

Photo by MC1(AW) Shane T. McCoy









# Speaking with Sailors

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy  
MCPON (SS/AW) Terry D. Scott

## MCPON Scott says farewell to the fleet

I have had the good fortune during the past four years to visit with thousands of our nation's best people, from those standing watch while underway, to those doing important work on some of the most remote places around the world, to those currently serving on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan on front lines of the Long War.

In each of my visits with you, it has not been lost on me the type of people our Navy relies on to do the job. Our families, our friends, our fellow citizens who call America home, can be grateful you raised your right hand and swore to stand the ground between them and those who would do us harm – and say to each one of us in this country – Not on My Watch.

Even with the advanced technology at our disposal and our ability to take the fight to our enemies, America's competitive edge in ensuring a safer world will remain our people. Our nation will demand hybrid, adaptable Sailors with the capability to anticipate and react to the unknown challenges of the future.

The Navy values those who can accept responsibility, who can adapt swiftly and eagerly to the changes in our organization, and yet be sensitive to the needs of their shipmates, more than those who remain specialized in the status quo of their existing rating of today. Self-reliant and complex people with the courage to think independently and challenge and question the way we've done things will continue to be sought by the Navy to create the new knowledge and information we will need.

I believe the Navy will continue to motivate those who may be willing to sit back waiting to be trained to become the Sailor who actively seeks to embrace technology and to pursue the process of education and lifelong learning to reach your potential.

But I have never been more proud of you and the job you have done as when we have seen the Iraqi people continue on the tentative, fitful journey toward embracing democracy, raising purple-dyed fingers in triumph as they voted, fingers

Photo by JO1 Preston Keres



that signaled a determination that they would not be cowed as they expressed their faith in a better tomorrow for their nation.


I am firm in my belief that terrorist groups and the nations that provide explicit or tacit support to them are studying our successes in Iraq and Afghanistan, and awesome military capability and the creative,

innovative and dedicated people that make up our competitive edge. I am certain we are providing lessons to them in the starkest terms of the consequences of continuing on with their nefarious aims. Our tireless efforts to spread democracy and the light of freedom strike directly at the black heart of terror and oppression around the world.

I have been just as proud seeing the images of the gratitude on the faces of those we have helped in the past year, images that are reward enough for the sacrifices you have made in these efforts, such as when we saw the faith in the eyes of hurricane victims when our Sailors arrived to restore hope to so many broken lives, and in the grateful expressions of earthquake victims in Pakistan when America came to help.

The Navy's awesome might was put to its most noble purpose in the past year as we helped rescue efforts following natural disaster, as well as in hundreds of humanitarian missions large and small around the world. The images of the people we help are a reminder that with the good fortune we enjoy in this country, we take our responsibility gravely to answer the call to aid whenever needed.

Your Honor, Courage and Commitment, your professionalism and dedication and the unwavering support of the loving and devoted families you leave behind are the foundation and make possible the unprecedented forward defense capability of the most powerful, capable Navy in the history of the world. You defend our life, our liberty and you pursue all who threaten it. You deserve to know everyday that the sacrifices you make in the pursuit of world peace and all who threaten it are not in vain.

I am humbled and grateful to have visited with you for the past four years and consider it a privilege to have served with Sailors like you, who are determined to leave the Navy a better place than they have found it. 

**Speaking with Sailors** is a monthly column initiated by the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy as a way of reaching out to the men and women of the fleet, whether they are stationed just down the road or halfway around the world.

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# Around the Fleet

## Sailors Warned Of VA Data Compromise

**T**he Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced last month that active-duty Sailors may be affected by the theft of military personnel data that occurred in May.

According to the VA, a duplicate database with data files was stolen from a VA employee's home. While the VA has received no reports that the stolen data has been used for fraudulent purposes, they are asking all veterans to be extra vigilant and to carefully monitor bank statements, credit card statements and any statements relating to recent financial transactions.

Several resources are available for people to go to for more information. The VA has set up a special Web site ([www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov)) and a toll-free telephone number (800-FED-INFO or 800-333-4636) that feature up-to-date news and information on the data compromise. The site offers tips on how to

check credit reports, how to guard against identity theft and whom to call if an individual believes any fraudulent activity is occurring using his or her personal information.

The Navy and DOD are working closely with the VA to determine how many Sailors and other service members may be affected by the compromise of records. Sailors whose information has been compromised will be notified by a letter from the VA and the Navy so they can take the appropriate steps.

Tips on how to watch for suspicious activity include the following:

- Closely monitor your bank and credit card statements for fraudulent transactions. Monitoring accounts online is the best way to detect fraud early.

- Place a 90-day fraud alert on your credit report, which tells creditors to contact you before opening any new accounts or making any changes to your existing accounts. This action may cause some delays if you are trying to obtain new credit.

You only need to contact one of three companies to place an alert. That company is then required to contact the other two.

The three companies are Equifax (800-525-6285, [www.equifax.com](http://www.equifax.com)), Experian (888-397-3742, [www.experian.com](http://www.experian.com)) and TransUnion (800-680-7289, [www.transunion.com](http://www.transunion.com)).

- Once the fraud alert has been posted, you are entitled to free copies of your credit reports. Review these reports for inquiries from companies you haven't contacted or accounts you didn't open. The alert can be renewed after 90 days.

Sailors are advised to take the following steps if they discover fraudulent accounts or transactions:

- Contact the financial institution to close the fraudulent account(s) that have been tampered with.

- File a report with the local police department.

- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission by phone at 877-438-4338, online at

[www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft) or by mail to Identity Theft Clearinghouse, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20580.

Other Web sites with more information on how to guard against identity theft include:

[www.privacy.ca.gov/sheets/cis3\\_english.htm](http://www.privacy.ca.gov/sheets/cis3_english.htm)  
[www.co.boulder.co.us/da/consumer/idtheft.htm](http://www.co.boulder.co.us/da/consumer/idtheft.htm) ☞

*Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel.*

## New Sea/Shore Rotation Policy Announced

**F**or the first time in more than four years, the Navy's sea/shore rotation policy is being updated to better match the Navy's billet base at sea and on shore.

## Ricky's Tour

By J01 Mike Jones





The updated policy, contained in NAVADMIN 130/06, announces modifications to existing tour lengths which were last revised in December 2001 (NAVADMIN 341/01).

"Getting the correct sea/shore rotation across the fleet is the first step toward creating a future force," said VADM John C. Harvey Jr., Chief of Naval Personnel. "We have been making assignments based on a sea/shore rotation that reflects the billet base of 2001 and does not take into account the almost 19,600 enlisted shore duty billets that have been programmed for elimination to date."

Earlier this year, a Sea/Shore Rotation Working Group convened to determine the optimal sea/shore rotation in the Navy. Chartered by the Chief of Naval Personnel, the group will continue analyzing and working on solutions to ensure sea/shore rotations match the needs of the fleet forces, and look at short and long-term challenges with the policy.

To develop this policy, the emphasis was first placed on properly manning sea duty and the front line operational units. Currently, 790 rates/ratings/NECs (Navy Enlisted Classifications) make up the Navy's sea/shore rotation force. Of these, 150 will have an increase to their sea duty time, with most seeing a change of six months or less. Forty will increase eight to 12 months, and only five will increase more than 12 months. On average, sea tour lengths for E-5 to E-9 will increase from 47 months to 51 months, while shore tour lengths will increase from 34 to 36 months.

Sailors within their nine-month window to negotiate for orders will be able to proceed with those orders. NPC will adjust Sailor projected rotation dates based on length of tour remaining. Projected rotation

dates (PRD) of February 2007 or earlier will not be adjusted.

"The working group is working hard to address potential billet imbalances of the future as new ship classes and squadrons come online," Harvey said. "They will also look at compensation strategies to increase flexibility and responsiveness to keep sea billets filled."

Future updates from the Sea/Shore Rotation Working Group will be provided as the group continues working to better align fleet and mission requirements while providing more predictable career tracks for Sailors. **S**

*Story by MC2 Amie Hunt, public affairs office, Navy Personnel Command.*

## CNP Guidance for Fitness Policy Amplified

**T**o ensure fleet, unit and Sailor readiness and to further enforce the Navy's physical fitness standards, VADM John C. Harvey Jr., Chief of Naval Personnel, provided detailed guidance recently on the mandatory administrative separation procedures and waiverable options for Sailors who have failed the Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA) three or more times in the last four years.

NAVADMIN 120-06, released to augment OPNAVINST 6110.1H, gives commanding officers (CO) the authority to submit waivers for Sailors showing progress or whose loss they determine would significantly reduce a command's readiness.

"These rules elevate the accountability for our COs to enforce the established standards," Harvey said. "We must adapt our

policy to reflect the demands of a worldwide deployable force and demand that our Sailors are always physically fit and ready to deploy."

The naval message authorizes commanding officers the opportunity to submit two types of waivers - a waiver for progress or a waiver for readiness.

To show reasonable progress, Sailors must be enrolled in their command's Fitness Enhancement Program (FEP) and demonstrate an increase in the number of push-ups and curl-ups they can do, as well as a decrease in the time for the run or swim. Exact criteria can be found in the revised OPNAVINST 6110.1H.

A waiver for readiness may be requested for a Sailor whose loss may affect fleet, unit or a specific community's readiness.

"Fitness is a readiness issue," said Harvey. "Commanders have been challenged to foster a positive fitness culture, and Sailors will be challenged to live this culture and help their shipmates meet the standard."

Beyond giving commanders the authority to initiate administrative separation procedures for

those who failed the PFA, the OPNAV instruction, released in August 2005, stresses the importance of leadership's role in the physical readiness program, and in encouraging Sailors to pursue fit lifestyles. It calls for time for physical training during the work week and evaluation of the program to ensure compliance with testing and reporting, FEP and other aspects of the program.

Commanders are directed to treat physical readiness as they do retention and attrition in fitness reports on their subordinate officers and senior enlisted leaders.

Also, officers and enlisted who failed their most recent PFA will be ineligible for promotion, advancement or frocking under these policy changes. They also must be entered into the FEP until the next official PFA.

Monthly mock-PFAs provide opportunities to regain eligibility for promotion or advancement, which is reinstated once a Sailor meets PFA requirements. Enrollment in FEP remains mandatory until the Sailor passes the official PFA.

Commanders will also have the authority to waive body

*continued on page 9*



**Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Joe Vincent recently flew to the Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C., to make a donation. Stationed aboard USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74), Vincent went to Georgetown to donate his bone marrow to a leukemia patient. While he doesn't know who will receive his bone marrow, he knows it's someone who needs it. According to Vincent, "If you've ever helped anyone before, you know that feeling you get. You just want to keep on helping."**



# Around the Fleet



▲ **Members of the Board of Inspection and Survey** inspect sprinkler nozzles during a test of the flight deck Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) system aboard *USS John C. Stennis* (CVN 74).

Photo by MCSN Josue L. Escobosa

◀ **An F/A-18F *Super Hornet* aircraft** leaves the flight deck aboard *USS Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) after performing a touch and go.

Photo by MC2 Matthew Bash



▼ **EM2 Vincent Dubose replaces a light switch aboard**  
the amphibious assault ship USS *Peleliu* (LHA 5).

Photo by KerryI Cacho



*continued from page 7*

composition assessment up to the Department of Defense maximum standard of 26 percent for males and 36 percent for females for those Sailors who score "outstanding" or "excellent" overall with no sub-scores below "good," and also present a neat, professional military appearance.

The detailed changes reflected in OPNAVINST 6110.1H are available on the Navy Physical Readiness Program Web site at [www.npc.navy.mil/command-support/physicalreadiness](http://www.npc.navy.mil/command-support/physicalreadiness). This site also contains other fitness, nutrition, and weight management references.

For more information on the PRP changes, see NAVADMIN 180-05 and 120-06 available at [www.npc.navy.mil](http://www.npc.navy.mil). ☞

*Story by LT Sarah Self-Kyler, public affairs office, Chief of Naval Personnel.*

## **Navy Exchange Monitors Cough Medicine Sales**

**N**avy Exchanges are monitoring sales of cough and cold medicine containing dexamethorphan due to an increased awareness of the new "robotripping" trend among teens and young adults.

Navy Exchange Service Command Chief Merchandising Officer Tess Paquette said patrons who look 18 or younger will have to show identification to purchase the products.

"The Navy Exchange is always looking for ways to help the Navy family," Paquette said. "By restricting the sales of these types of products, we're helping to keep our families safe and healthy."

Nearly 10 percent of U.S. teens and young adults have used cough medicine to get high,

according to the Partnership for a Drug Free America.

Dexamethorphan is a synthetically produced substance that's chemically related to codeine. Slang terms referring to dexamethorphan highs are "robotripping," "skittling" and "dexing."

"Dexamethorphan at high doses allows users to feel high, dizzy and so on," said Eric Schuetz, a certified specialist at the Maryland Poison Center. "But what they don't realize is they can also experience vomiting, become agitated and hallucinate. [That] in turn is a hindrance to their character development."

Cough medicines containing dexamethorphan usually contain other pain relievers. The National Drug Intelligence Center warns that large dosages of acetaminophen can cause liver damage. Large dosages of chlorpheniramine can increase heart rate, cause lack of coordination, seizures and coma. Large dosages of guaifenesin can cause vomiting.

Doctors at the National Naval Medical Center said the Navy is moving in the right direction in limiting the sales, but parents and leaders must also be aware of drug use signs and symptoms.

"This is an important first step the Navy and the rest of the country should take," said Army LT COL Jeffrey Hutchinson, Bethesda's Adolescent Medicine department head. "The best thing to do is be aware ... the Navy and all [other] services have programs designed to help individuals who use drugs or abuse them."

The center reports the Drug Enforcement Administration is monitoring dexamethorphan abuses and may add it to the Controlled Substance Act. ☞

*Story by MC3 Heather Weaver, public affairs office, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Md.*

To be considered for the "Around the Fleet" section, forward your **high resolution (5" x 7" at 300 dpi) images** with full credit and cutline information, including **full name, rank and duty station** to: [navyvisualnews@navy.mil](mailto:navyvisualnews@navy.mil)

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# Around the Fleet



## ◀ CDR George Linville, ship's surgeon, and HM1

Cynthia Donaldson perform surgery in the operating room aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76). *Reagan* and embarked Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 14 are currently deployed in support of the global war on terrorism, while conducting Maritime Security Operations in the region.

Photo by MC2 Shane Tuck

## ▼ A hose team assigned to a ship's repair locker

combats a controlled fire on the Mobile Aircraft Firefighting Training Device (MAFTD) aboard USS *John F. Kennedy* (CV 67).

Photo by MC3 Tommy Gilligan





## ◀ The Honolulu Pearl Canoe Club escorts the Military

Sealift Command hospital ship USNS *Mercy* (T-AH 19) into Pearl Harbor for a scheduled port visit.

Photo by MCC Joe Kane



## ▲ Family members welcome home the crew of USS

*Winston S. Churchill* (DDG 81).

Photo by MC2 Joshua L. Glassburn

## ▼ BMC Ben Hoover, assigned to Naval Mobile

Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74, paddles across a moat in an attempt to complete a team-building obstacle at the leadership reaction course.

Photo by MC1 Rob Wesselman



## DOD Announces Detection of Intrusion into TMA Files

**T**he Department of Defense announced recently that routine monitoring detected unusual activity on one of the TRICARE Management Activity's (TMA) public servers.

Investigation of the activity led to the discovery that an intrusion had occurred and information was compromised.

William Winkenwerder Jr., the assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, said the department's response was swift but focused.

"As a result of this incident, we immediately implemented enhanced security controls throughout the network and installed additional monitoring tools to improve security of existing networks and data files," he said. "Such incidents are reprehensible, and we deeply regret the inconvenience this may cause the people we serve."

Information contained in the accessed files varied, and investigators do not know the intent of the crime or if any of the information will be misused.

TMA has sent letters to affected individuals advising them of the incident and that the compromise of their personal information may potentially place them at risk for identity theft. Additional information has been provided to assist them in understanding the potential risks and precautions they can take to protect their identities.

The Defense Criminal Investigative Service is participating in the investigation. **S**

*Story courtesy of DOD.*

## Larger Group of Sailors Now Eligible for ESRP

**T**he Navy expanded eligibility for the Enlisted Supervisor Retention Pay program (ESRP) recently, to include supervisors from select ratings in Zone D, or 16-20 years of service.

ESRP is a career-oriented incentive program for experienced senior enlisted Sailors in the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program who hold the Navy Enlisted Classifications (NEC) of: 3363, 3364, 3365, 3366, 3393, 3394, 3395 and 3396. It replaces the Selective Reenlistment Bonus for those personnel.

"There's a strong civilian economy and it's rebounding," said CDR Jeff Manning, nuclear enlisted community manager and ESRP manager. "Our Sailors are highly trained and have a lot of employment choices. What we want to do is to stay competitive, to make the Navy the employer of choice."

A two-phased approach to ESRP was part of the program's design from the outset, said Manning. When launched in November 2004, ESRP was offered to select personnel with 10 to 16 years of service only. The second phase, effective May 2, provides further incentives to highly skilled Sailors with up to 20 years of service.

"We wanted to continue to compensate these Sailors through a 20-year career," said Manning.

While the Selective Reenlistment Bonus has a policy limit of \$60,000 for most ratings in the Navy, the ESRP program offers up to \$100,000, said Manning. It saves dollars in manpower and in training costs by retaining a skilled Sailor rather than "to grow a new Sailor," he added.

Sailors with 16 to 20 years of service may not be eligible to receive the full \$100,000 but will

*continued on page 13*

# Around the Fleet



◀ **A Sailor assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 6, Det. 16, is hoisted out of the water during an EOD exercise.**

Photo by MC2 Miguel A. Contreras

▶ **Five Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 133 receive Purple Hearts for wounds received while serving in direct support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.**

Photo by MC3 Ja'lon A. Rhinehart

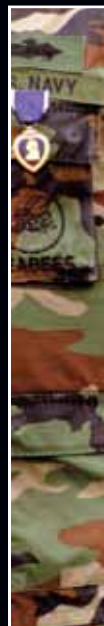
▼ **Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit (EOD) Sailors exchange diving techniques with a Singaporean EOD chief warrant officer.**

Photo by MC3 M. Jeremie Yoder



▲ **CS2 Jerwin Mejia adds the final toppings onto slices of cheesecake that will be served to the mothers stationed aboard USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), during a special Mother's Day lunch.**

Photo by MC3 Kevin O'Brien







*continued from page 11*

be eligible for significant bonuses depending on how close they are to their 20th year of service. Current DOD guidance puts a limit of \$200,000 a Sailor can collect in retention bonuses throughout their career. **ES**

*Story by MC3 Trevor Andersen, public affairs office, Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.*

## Navy EOD Expanding, Needs Recruits

**T**he Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) community is forming its own rating and looking for Sailors to fill an additional 80 billets.

Navy Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) Command Master Chief CMDCM Anthony Santino, the Navy's senior enlisted EOD technician, or "Master Blaster of the Navy," recommends that Sailors interested in converting to EOD do their homework to make sure this is the career path for them.

"We want people who know this is what they want to do, so they'll stick with it when the training gets tough," said Santino.

EOD candidates are pre-screened prior to entry in the program for a number of attributes. Sailors must achieve qualifying scores on the ASVAB, fitness test, pressure test, security clearance, dive physical and have no non-judicial punishments.

If qualified and accepted into the program, new candidates report for two weeks of training at Prospective Student Indoctrination in Great Lakes, Ill. Sailors then report for two months of dive training at the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center in Panama City, Fla., and 10 months of ordnance training at the Naval School

Explosive Ordnance Disposal at Eglin Air Force Base. At Eglin, candidates will spend a significant amount of time in the classroom and in the field learning about chemical, biological, nuclear, conventional and improvised explosive devices.

After successful completion of that arduous process, potential EOD techs will then report for six weeks of tactical training in San Diego, three weeks of jump school at Fort Benning, Ga., and when the opportunity arises, free-fall school.

"Don't volunteer for EOD training just because you don't like your current rate," Santino re-emphasized. "You really need to want to do this."

The NECC EOD Force Recruiter, EODCS(EWS/SW) Scott Treible, said that part of the pre-screening is looking for Sailors with that "certain something."

"A majority of the people we get are your classic 'Type A' personalities. They have very active lifestyles, enjoy team sports, are competitive, think fast and perform well under pressure," Treible said. "At the same time, they need to be independent and decisive. People that can't think on their feet and make immediate decisions aren't going to get through the program."

"It's fun! This is the only place in the world you can do the things we do on a regular basis," Treible added. "Free-fall parachuting, diving, weapons firing, tactical combat training, intensive physical training, robotics – surface and underwater, and at the end of the day, we get to blow something up. How can you beat that?"

To find out more information about becoming an EOD technician, contact the NECC Force EOD Recruiter, visit [www.eod.navy.mil](http://www.eod.navy.mil), or talk to an EOD tech. **ES**

*Story by MC1(SW) Phil Beaufort, public affairs office, Expeditionary Combat Command.*

# A Marine's best friend


**FMF AFGHANISTAN**

Story and photos by MC1(SCW/SS)

James G. Pinsky







**T**he corpsmen warned me the air would be thin up there, but I didn't notice. This was my first combat patrol and like a child trapped in the dark, I was petrified.

The shoestring-narrow roads around the 6,000-foot mountains of Torkhem, Afghanistan make the battle-hardened Marines I was embedded with something the Taliban doesn't – nervous.

The drivers, behaving more like tightrope walkers than desert warriors, eased their Humvees along the trails with one eye on the path and the other pragmatically scanning the limitless caves and nomad populations for the enemy.

I didn't move – not a millimeter – while we climbed along paths so narrow that I honestly thought if I breathed too hard I'd tip us over the side, plummeting us more than a mile down to certain death.

I didn't breathe. I didn't blink. I waited for Taliban to ambush us from behind every rock, and there were a lot of rocks.

HN "Doc" Joseph Nededog, noticed my white knuckles.

"You know, I've been waiting for months for one of those goats to fall off the side of these mountains," Nededog quipped. "They never do," he said with a grin. I smiled, and finally breathed.



◀ **Danger lurks around every corner in Afghanistan.**

In the mountains behind this Marine Security Patrol the smoke from an improvised explosive device (IED) billows into the sky. The device missed its target though as the Torkhem border police and their Marine Corps counterparts change their schedules and routes to throw off the insurgency. This IED destroyed a fuel truck destined for Bagram Air Field in Kabul but didn't injure anyone aboard.



That's what "Docs" do. They make everyone comfortable, and when you're a corpsman for Marines in the heart of insurgent country, helping a photojournalist keep his lunch down and his lungs working is an easy day.

Nededog has seen worse.

After all, it wasn't the enemy that made these combat veterans slow their pace, and rightfully so. It was Afghanistan itself, not the besieged Taliban, that claimed 3rd Platoon's first soul in a Humvee rollover

less than a month before this patrol.

Doc Nededog rolled that day too; still, he managed to treat his turret gunner who lay motionless, crushed between his weapon and the callous Afghanistan desert floor. It wasn't enough. Third Platoon lost





a Marine that day. Losing any Marine is terrible, but to these Marines, all Marines, the thought of losing a corpsman was unimaginable.

That's how much Marines love their corpsmen.

"We're a brotherhood out here. To lose a corpsman would be a huge blow," said Marine SSgt. Matthew Morse, 3rd Platoon Commander, "maybe more than losing a Marine, because our corpsmen are our security blankets."

### ◀Afghanistan's best defense

may be its very rugged terrain. While on patrol with the 1/3 Marines, mountain climbs both on foot and in vehicles along narrow trails like this one tested the resolve of coalition forces. Despite the altitude, and the rocky trails, the Marines always got where they wanted thus denying Taliban forces sanctuary even around the legendary Khyber Pass.

And when you're actively seeking to eradicate some of the world's most dangerous guerrilla warfare fighters, you bring one hell of a security blanket.

"Corpsmen have the trauma training to react to any situation," said Morse. "The corpsman who was in the vehicle that rolled and killed one Marine had enough awareness to recover from his injuries and still treat the Marine."

And that's what Marines expect corpsmen to do because history says they will. No single rating in the Navy is more decorated for valor than the hospital corpsman. The Marines don't wonder if he will save their lives. They just wonder when.

"Being a Marine is hard enough, and we are their corpsmen," said HMC Claude English, 1/3 Marines battalion medical chief. "We're the ones who get them home to mom and dad. If they get hurt they come to you, and that's why they cherish you."

Rollovers are the least of Doc Nededog's worries today. Just a few miles away from their convoy, black smoke billowed into the desert sky. Too far away to harm these Marines, it garnered no more than a passing glance. The sights and sounds of war don't impress them any more.

But the smells do.

The burning trash and raw sewage odors linger like cheap perfume, giving some areas of Afghanistan an unforgettable stench.

"The smell always reminds me that something isn't right here," said Nededog.

Hours later, back at Firebase Torkhem, officially called Forward Operating Base (FOB) Torkhem, the Marines found out that the smoke, caused by a fuel truck explosion from an improvised explosive device (IED), may have been meant for them.

“The Taliban know we’re here helping the Afghan border police,” said Morse. “It could have been ugly, but the border police did their job. They found the bomb in enough time to get everyone away. Nobody was hurt, not even the driver.”

Just a year ago, according to the international police mentors, that bomb would have made it through to its destination. The training is working.

And that was why Doc Nededog and his Marines climb and drive Afghanistan’s

mountains and cross its deserts. They play big brother to the developing Afghan border police, helping them stand on their own. The idea being few bullies would pick a fight with a little brother with such a ferocious sibling. So far the plan worked, making 3rd platoon’s corpsmen – combat-wise – very bored.

Still, the Marines bring their corpsmen because bad things happen in war, just not today.

All in all, it was another quiet day for Nededog. Sure, he served as a faithful ear for a few Marines, handed out some doxycycline (anti-malaria medication), and made sure his warriors stayed

hydrated, but no one had a sucking chest wound from a sniper’s bullet, or severed limbs from a mine. No one was screaming, “Corpsmen Up!” Not today, anyway.

Savvy corpsmen learn to savor inactivity.

“Nobody deploys with Marines and expects to be bored,” said Nededog. “But



▲ **HN Joe Nededog learned to take care of his Marines**

at Field Medical Service School (FMSS), and that means taking care of anyone or anything that the Marines love like the adopted monkey at Fire Base Torkhem, Afghanistan.

► **Marines (from left) Pvt. Ni Huynh, Pvt. Travis**

Hromada, Cpl. Joseph Pinney and Doc Nededog hang out together moments prior to a scheduled convoy.

◀ **Afghan locals like this young girl sometimes visited**

the Marines at Torkhem Fire Base to see the Navy corpsmen. According to Doc Nededog, his knowledge level often far exceeded the best medical care most of the Afghan people received.





here, where every day could be your last, boring is just fine.”

Still, Nededog is prepared for the worst, and expects it every day.

His grooming began at Field Medical Service School (FMSS) East, Camp Johnson, N.C., one of two Fleet Marine Force (FMF) breeding grounds for Sailors

these days. FMSS West, located at Camp Pendleton, Calif., serves as the other source.

There, Marines and Marine-tested Sailors instill the basic skills and instincts corpsmen will need to keep Marines’ minds squarely on their mission.

“Marines fight harder when they have a good corpsman with them,” said Morse.

“Then they don’t worry about dying, they worry about the mission and that’s one of the best ways to make sure everyone comes home alive.”

Nededog, according to his platoon, is a good one.

“He’s one of us,” said Marine PFC Oscar Repreza.







And when a Marine says that, any seasoned corpsman knows no better compliment exists.

"First and foremost, you have to have their respect," said English. "The most important factor in a successful FMF corpsman is to be able to adapt to the lifestyle of the Marine Corps. This means living and breathing every day like a Marine. You PT with them and you don't fall out. You hike with them, you don't fall out. On patrols you know the hand signals because you are a Marine, a Marine who

just happens to have a lot of medical knowledge."

All of 3rd Platoon's corpsmen follow that corpsman code of conduct.

"I was just an E-2 when I reported to my first Marine Corps unit," said HM2 (FMF/SW/AW) Dennis Astor, Senior Corpsman, Forward Operating Base Torkhem. "I just did what they did. I stood their duties, volunteered for their working parties, etc. If a Marine asked for help, I gave it to them each and every time."

If you don't, you're worthless to them.

"The worst thing a corpsman can do is to betray his Marines," said Astor. "Drop your pack on a hike, quit or give excuses, or turn down a Marine who needs help and they'll never forgive you. If you're a good corpsman, the Marines will do anything in the world for you, but if you're a bad corpsman they'll hate you, and believe me you don't want that."

There's nothing but respect for the corpsmen in 3rd Platoon. Their senior corpsmen earned it in another desert.

"In Iraq my convoy was hit by an IED,"





said Astor. "We lost several Marines that day, and I'm sure the only reason I didn't die was because I am so small. The armor on the truck completely covered me."

Wounded, he still treated his Marines. In fact, he refused orders home and returned to his unit months later to fight with them again. He still carries shrapnel in his head from that attack and is reminded of its presence on very cold Afghan mornings.

"They told me it would do more damage to remove it," said Astor. "I really feel it with my Kevlar helmet on."



▲ **HM2 (FMF/SW/AW) Dennis Astor, Senior Corpsman at Forward Operating Base Torkhem** treats Afghan National Army soldiers during routine sick call hours at Torkhem.

#### ◀ **Marine Corps Lance Cpl. France A. Mahabub, 3rd Platoon, 1st Battalion/3rd**

Marine Division set security for police investigators at the site of an IED explosion close to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border control station at Torkhem, Afghanistan. The fuel truck exploded without injury thanks to Afghanistan border police finding the explosive device during routine checks soon enough to clear the area. U.S. Marines from Forward Operating Base Torkhem provide security for international police advisors in Afghanistan who are training the Afghanistan Border Police.

Seasoned Marines have an even deeper respect for corpsmen.

"Honestly, sometimes corpsmen put Marines to shame because of what they can do," said Morse. "They carry more weight than us because they carry what we carry, and all of their medical stuff."

The corpsman, when he's good, can help Marines with more than medicine. He can be a point of inspiration.

"If a Marine starts to get tired on a hike and sees the corpsman just chugging along it motivates him to keep going," said Morse.

At Torkhem, all of 1/3's Docs rotate through the different taskings of the platoon. Whether the Marines are patrolling up and down mountains, or hiking 25 miles along an alleged IED hot zone, any of 1/3's corpsmen can do the job well enough for the Marines not to think about them.

"Humps are fun," said Nededog. "The climbs can be steep around here, but we

get through it. The Afghan National Army (ANA) used to pick on us because we didn't climb as fast as they did on foot when we first got here. But we put them in our gear including body armor one time and they didn't last five minutes."

Nededog's Marines got better at climbing. And so did the Docs.

Corpsmen like Doc Astor, HM2 (FMF) Scott "Doc" Kuniyuki, and Doc Nededog don't push themselves so they can outshine the Marines. They do it so they will always be there for them. Because the greatest fear a corpsman has is that he won't be able to help a Marine when he needs him.

"In the Marine Corps, there's no such thing as [keeping] office hours," said Astor. "In a regular clinic I might see patients from 0700-1700 every day, but with my Marines I am available 24/7. We call it barracks medicine, and it matters."

Docs are expected to do far more than hand out band-aids and Motrin. They fill

the role of brothers, best friends, fathers, psychologists, chaplains or whatever the Marine needs at the time.

"Marines come to us for comfort, and it doesn't matter if it's physical, mental or emotional because we want our Marines to be healthy," said Astor. "We look for problems and consult with them on a regular basis. They know we care every day, not just when they obviously need medical attention."

It's the job of the corpsmen regardless of their surroundings. The rigors of war can compound normally manageable problems. A fight with a wife, money problems, or other bad news can take a Marine's mind off his mission and get him hurt.

The Marines in Torkhem talk to their corpsmen because they know their corpsmen care.

"Anything can kill you here," said Nededog, "an IED, a bullet, carelessness or just bad luck. We know we have to make sure our Marines are on top of their game every second of every day."

While corpsmen are expected to be cure-alls for whatever ails a Marine, they know that their medical expertise only comes into play when it's needed. Otherwise, they're Marines in every sense of the word.

"Corpsmen need to know hand-to-hand combat skills because when they go out with Marines they might have to get down and dirty during a fire fight," said Sgt. Michael Belliston. "They might have to fight their way to a hurt Marine, or fight his way out with that Marine."

So the corpsmen learn. They learn how to fight hand-to-hand, how to fire MK-19 grenade launchers, drive Humvees, rappel, take point on a patrol, etc. And they do it on the front lines, not just during training exercises back in the states.

The Sailors hold their own.

"I've always been impressed with the



level of skills they possess from the relatively short amount of training they go through," said Morse. "My corpsmen can jump on any weapon out here and perform as well as any Marine. Heck, I've met some docs who could outshoot every Marine in his platoon."

Still, the Marines would rather the corpsmen not have to prove their battle readiness during a firefight.

"A good corpsman will put rounds downrange if we need him to," said Morse, "but we try to keep them in the rear so they are around to save us."

Aside from being a sure shot, Marine Corps leadership always makes sure their Marines understand Docs are approachable, but they're still in the military. It's a standard they set from the very beginning as part of the legendary discipline Marines use to win wars.

"I make it a point when I get to a new platoon to introduce our docs," said Morse. "I'll say something like 'I know he's doc, and he's laid back, but you will respect him and treat him as you would any Marine.'"

The respect flows both ways.

▲ **Doc Nededog (left), like all FMF corpsmen, eats, sleeps, plays and fights with his fellow Marines.**

► **Marines and Afghan locals alike** retire back to their day-to-day routines after another day of visiting border police outposts, where corpsmen may end up treating sick or wounded Afghan police or army personnel.

"I also expect my corpsmen not to be afraid to speak up if they see one of my Marines doing something wrong."

In short, the Marines expect their docs to be, well, a Marine.

And that's the docs' goal as well because that's when they know they're doing their job.

"The best compliment we can give a corpsman," said Morse, "is to treat them just as we would any Marine." ■

*Pinsky is a photojournalist for All Hands.*

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P R O W L I N G

Story and photos  
by MC1(SCW/SS)  
James G. Pinsky

A F G H A N I S T A N

LIFE IN AN EXPEDITIONARY SQUADRON







**T**he first mistake the Taliban made was harboring those who attacked America. The second may have been thinking the Navy's wrath reached only as far as an ocean tide.

Nestled deep in Asia Minor at Bagram Air Field (BAF), Afghanistan, between 8,000 foot mountains and tundra so dry even the camels spit dust, sit the "Wizards" of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 133, home to more than 200 Sailors and their haze-gray EA-6B *Prowlers* that, without bombs, bullets or missiles, wreak havoc on the enemy during Operation *Enduring Freedom*.

And while the actual mission of the *Prowler* itself is classified, one story that can and should be told is how these Sailors have traded salt for desert dust to help America win the war on terrorism.

For some, the choice has made all the difference in the world.

"In 2001 I was on the ship when we launched our attacks," said Aviation Electrician's Mate 1st Class Jeremy Moncier. "We dropped a lot of ordnance, and all I got to see were the planes coming back empty. Being here now makes the war different for me because I get to see the rebuilding and actually meet the people we're helping, and that means something to me. It gives me hope that what we're doing here works and that Afghanistan has a future."

Indeed, breathing the same air and dusting off the same sand as the enemy is a perspective most Sailors have never experienced, especially when they work with aircraft sporting tail hooks.

◀ **Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 133**, the "Wizards," is home to a group of Sailors not much different than those aboard a ship, except they're in the middle of a desert and the enemy is just over the next hill. The *Prowlers* of VAQ 133 live in a much less corrosive environment, are bedded down in portable shelters (left) and constantly contribute to OEF missions.



“Being here makes the war on terror very real,” said Moncier.

Despite the constant threat of rocket attacks and face-to-face encounters with al-Qaida insurgents, many Wizards swear by the expeditionary lifestyle.

“This is way better than a boat,” said Senior Chief Aviation Electronics Technician Joseph Roberson, “because my living space is a lot better here. I have a 9-by-7 foot space to call my own instead of a 3-by-6 foot space of a coffin rack. That’s prime real estate in the Navy.”

Roberson’s point is echoed throughout the squadron as one of the reasons why most Wizards prefer the desert life to the high seas.

“On a ship, there’s nowhere to hide,” said Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class (AW) Josh Decker. “You can’t ever really be alone. But here, if you want to get away from it all, you can. We have two exchanges at BAF compared to just the MWR store on a ship. “And,” added Decker, “we can all have Internet, TV and phone calls whenever we want.”

While they might have the space to have whatever they want compared to a ship, living in a desert means things aren’t always there for them in the first place. For expeditionary Sailors, that just means another opportunity to tinker.

“Since pretty much nothing we are used to is native here in Afghanistan, if you’re good with a hammer and nails, there are plenty of opportunities to build things here like desks, shelves and even grow a patch of grass,” said AM1 Jordan Gross. “It can be a fun project if you’re handy with the tools.”





While having more creature comforts plays a significant role as to why many Wizards prefer desert life to being underway, it isn't the only difference between traditional salty Sailors and their landlubber shipmates.

"On a ship, it's 16-hour days," said Decker. Here, it's a lot different with constant 12-hour shift work. We don't have to worry about the catapult, the burns, the steam, but then again we don't get port calls here either."

Even the aircraft themselves are at an advantage in the quality-of-life department in the desert.

◀ **Afghanistan's high mountains serve as a safe haven for Taliban fighters,** but the skies are owned by coalition forces who use assets like *Prowlers* to give our war fighters a technology-based edge in the war on terrorism.

▼ **Small units like VAQ 133 live by solid teamwork. Here they perform routine maintenance on a fuselage.** The work environment can range from freezing cold to scorching heat.





▲ **In an expeditionary squadron, the land war is never really out of mind.**

The detonation of unexploded ordnance by coalition EOD personnel is a tangible reminder. Here, VAQ 133 Sailors, along with other Bagram Air Field personnel observe a scheduled detonation for clearing unexploded ordnance on land to be used for a new runway.

► **All Sailors understand the inherent dangers of being in the military,**

but being in a place like Bagram Air Field, in Kabul, Afghanistan, makes that danger more than just a thought. It is an intimate, everyday reality.

“Afghanistan is ideal for these planes as far as corrosion prevention goes,” said Gross. “The heat in the summer affects the hydraulics, but still I don’t miss battling salt spray’s corrosive properties.”

“Maintenance wise, it’s a little tougher here,” said AT1(AW) Jeremy Dirks, “because we don’t have an AIMD [Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department] like we do on a ship. If we have any repairs on that level here we have to send them off to Germany.”

“Career-wise, an expeditionary squadron should absolutely be considered an option,” said Navy Counselor 1st Class (AW/SW) Hamidullah Lebron. “Like any small command, you have a lot of unit integrity here. And, you can break out easier among your peers. You have LPO positions here just like you do on ships, and there are plenty of leadership opportunities.”

Aside from keeping planes in the air on a constant basis, simply being at a combined

forces installation like BAF gives Wizards opportunities, and entertainment, they’d likely never see anywhere fish swim under their feet.

“Here, we interact with the other services all the time,” said AT3 Austin Stephenson.

In fact, VAQ-133 has four Air Force officers attached to it.

“I’ve learned a lot about the different rank structures here,” Stephenson added. “We get saluted a lot here because people see the eagles on our collars and think we’re officers. It’s fun.”

With less than 1,000 Sailors in the Afghanistan theater, seeing them is still a rare enough experience for Soldiers, Airmen and Marines to warrant the occasional humorous sea, err ... desert story.

“Once I had a guy ask why we carry torpedoes on our jets when we’re in the middle of the desert,” said AT3 Mitch Rhee. EA-6B *Prowlers* are not armed but carry fuel pods under their wings.



Too cold, too dusty, apparent field promotion saluting and the occasional Sailor jokes aside, the bottom line in VAQ-133 is making sure the *Prowlers* stay in the air, and the Wizards understand that commitment hinges on their dedication, not their location.

“Our quality of life might be better here, minus port calls,” said Decker, “but our job is the same. We keep our *Prowlers* flying. There’s a war going on and they need our planes so we don’t take holidays.”

Despite being surrounded by miles of sand instead of seawater, Wizard Sailors





► **The mission of the EA-6B Prowler** is to dominate the enemy's electromagnetic spectrum through the precise, lethal application of electronic attack.

don't see much difference in their day-to-day jobs at BAF versus an aircraft carrier.

"We don't do a lot of tailhook maintenance out here," said Decker. ☞

*Pinsky is a photojournalist for All Hands.*

#### Website Exclusive

Find more photos online at [www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200607/feature\\_2/](http://www.news.navy.mil/media/allhands/flash/ah200607/feature_2/)











# LANDLOCKED LEARNING

## Navy Mentors in Afghanistan

» *When Afghanistan told the world they wanted a professional army, America knew just who to send, Sailors.*

They repelled the British in 1880. Russia still flinches at the word Mujahedeen. And even Genghis Khan looked over his shoulder when he passed through Afghanistan. Nobody needs to teach Afghans how to win wars. But, they'd really like to learn how to keep the peace instead.

Story and photos by MC1(SCW/SS) James G. Pinsky

◀ **Afghan National Army company commanders are mentored in the American style of leadership, using non-commissioned officers as chain of command links, unlike the former Soviet Union leadership style of using only officers. Individual augmentees serve in a variety of roles including military advisors.**



## ◀ The influence of the United States

is seen throughout Afghanistan, especially in its military. Americans serve as military advisors in a variety of functions including supply and logistics, health, sanitation and even appearance.

“They’re tired of fighting,” said LT Philip Mlynarski. “They want to make their army good enough so they don’t have to fight anymore.”

America shares Afghanistan’s expectation. So along with the bullets, bandages and bombs it sent over to Operation *Enduring Freedom* America sent the one thing every student needs – teachers.

Known as embedded training teams, or ETTs, groups of highly-skilled Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Sailors are teaching a military – barely three years old – how to build, train and maintain a professional army.

Yes. Sailors.

While the Navy defers to the Army, for now, as the resident experts on ground wars, Sailors do hold an edge in some critical qualities of any profession – logistics and organization.

“The Army just doesn’t have the expeditionary planning skills that we do,” said CDR Oswaldo Guevara, “and that’s where we have an edge. We can definitely help the Afghan National Army (ANA) get organized.”

And while fierce, cunning and brave are words most of the world’s military would use to describe Afghanistan’s army, organized isn’t. Organized logistics does more than allow an army to find its socks. It gives it endurance, character and most importantly, confidence. And the ANA is banking its future on the idea that a professional, confident army can give its people something no other Afghan military force has been able to achieve. Sustained peace.

No one at Camp Victory, Herat, Afghanistan, doubts that Sailors belong on the ETTs.

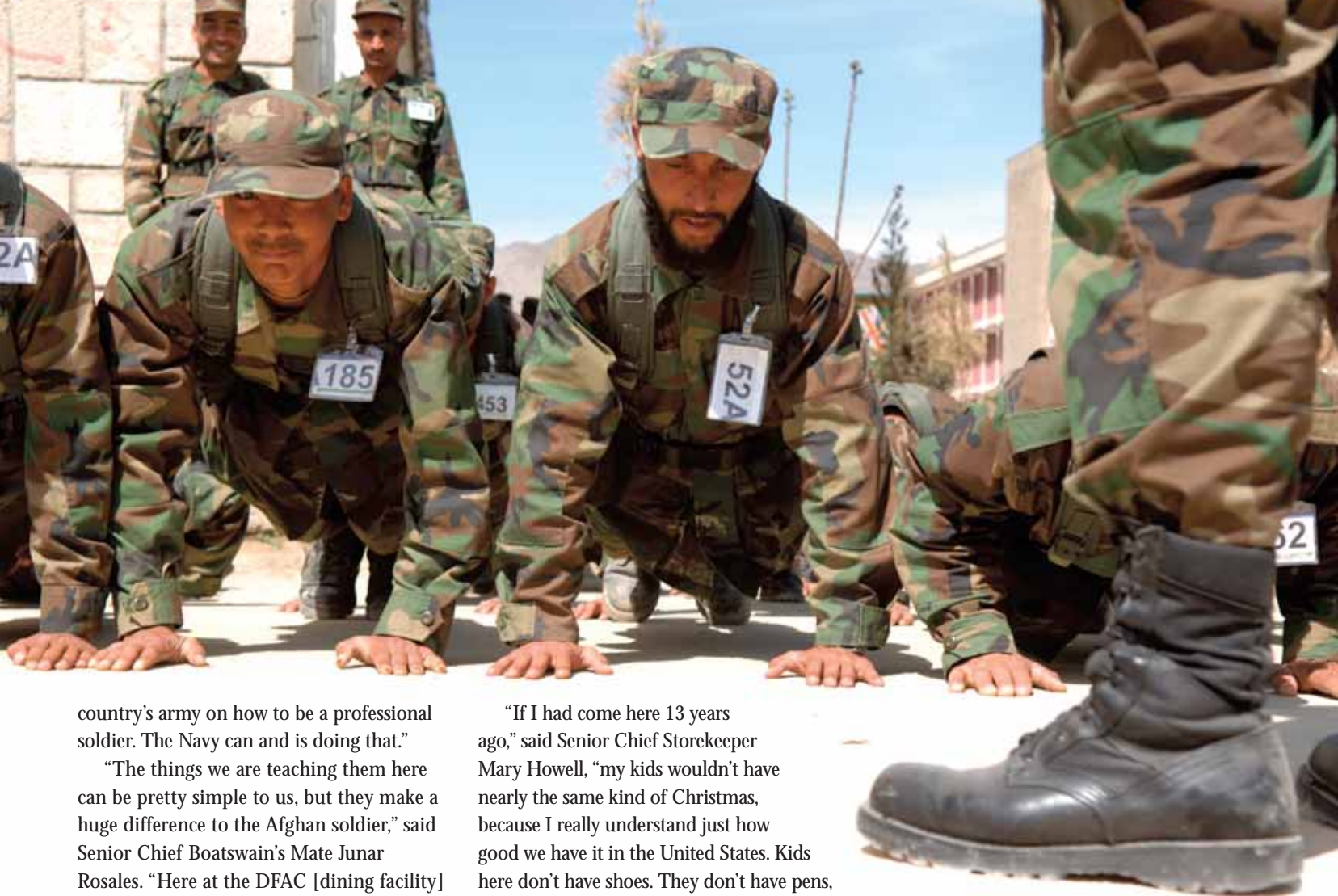
“This isn’t high technology training,” said Army Lt.Col. John Boyd, team chief, 1/207th Brigade, Regional Command Advisory Group (RCAG)-West. “This is training a third world

## ◀ SK1(SW/AW) Melvin Hayden inspects

the athletic shoes Afghan National Army recruits want to exchange at the Central Issuing Facility (CIF), at the new Kabul Military Training Facility (KMTF) located in Kabul, Afghanistan. Navy storekeepers are deployed to Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Phoenix to provide logistical support for one of the world’s newest armies.







country's army on how to be a professional soldier. The Navy can and is doing that."

"The things we are teaching them here can be pretty simple to us, but they make a huge difference to the Afghan soldier," said Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate Junar Rosales. "Here at the DFAC [dining facility] some of the Afghans haven't been paid in months because of simple paperwork errors. Things like [a paycheck] really help the morale around here. These guys are also learning to keep this place clean. They had no idea what a 'field day' was. They do now," grinned Rosales.

The Navy mentors have a great deal of patience with their Afghan partners because they understand that education takes time. No one doubts Afghan resolve, especially after hearing what they had to endure before their liberation.

"What was life like before we attacked? Let me tell you what the interpreters told us," said LT Frank Couture. "People who didn't follow Taliban rules were hung in the middle of town with fish hooks and disemboweled. People feared for their lives, every day. Now, people – including women, can have jobs and get an education."

It's a tale of persecution and poverty all of the Sailors are familiar with, and one that has changed many of them.

"If I had come here 13 years ago," said Senior Chief Storekeeper Mary Howell, "my kids wouldn't have nearly the same kind of Christmas, because I really understand just how good we have it in the United States. Kids here don't have shoes. They don't have pens, paper and they sure don't have PlayStation."

And in a country where families have little, its army has even less. Sailors like Howell and Chief Storekeeper Dave Torres came to Afghanistan to change all of that.

"These guys aren't used to having anything new," said Torres. "As a mentor for logistics and supply I had a challenge to both equip and educate the ANA to a professional level. They needed everything from uniforms that fit, to boots, weapons, vehicles and even toiletry items."

One of the many obstacles for mentors like Torres was overcoming thousands of years of Afghan culture.

"It took a while for us to convince them that anything new was alright to keep for themselves," said Torres. "They always thought that anything new was just good fortune, not proper logistic support, so they considered it a gift from God. And gifts they give to their families or their village. It's an honorable concept, but it wasn't helping to outfit the ANA."

### ▲ Navy storekeepers serving as

individual augmentees have helped the Afghan National Army outfit itself with the kind of equipment and clothing more in line with a professional army. They are also incorporating PT into their training plans for the ANA – both as exercise and as a corrective measure.

Other Navy mentors experienced similar situations.

Chief Storekeeper Archee Santos had the unique responsibility of mentoring one of the ANA Kandak's, or battalions' company commanders, executive officers, and first sergeants for the Higher Headquarters Company (HHC).

One of the first things Santos recognized as a mentor for the ANA is that they had no standard of values like the Navy's Core Values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. It had echoing effects throughout the battalion's chain of command because soldiers had no one looking out for them on a daily basis. According to Santos, their military leadership





▲ **HMCS(SW/AW) Stephen Murray is**

one of several individual augmentees stationed with Afghan National Soldiers at Camp Victory, Herat, Afghanistan. One of his many jobs has been to upgrade the Afghan dining facility through rigorous inspections and educational training. Here, he inspects fuel storage for the wood-burning stoves Afghans use to cook their food. Afghans still use wood today because of the very high price of more modern fuels like natural gas, diesel and kerosene.

was based on the old Soviet style, which did not make use of non-commissioned officers as leaders.

"Before, there were officers and enlisted

and that was it," said Santos. "If you were an Afghan soldier that's all you were, just a grunt. You had no chain of command. You only had the commander. If you got anything taken care of it was luck. There were no checks and balances like our chain of command."

Santos quickly instilled a sense of pride, responsibility and hierarchy based on the Navy's leadership structure.

"I taught them that as leaders it is their job to look after their soldiers first and foremost," said Santos. "Once the soldiers saw that their leadership cared about them, that they were going to be there for them every day, there wasn't anything the soldiers wouldn't do for

their leaders. It's a basic leadership principle, but it's one that they simply didn't know."

As a mentor in a foreign land, the language and culture barriers proved to be the toughest obstacles in Santos' way.

"As a leader I've learned that you can't come down hard on these guys," said Santos, "because doing that to them, especially with other soldiers around is considered shame and shame, has far-reaching effects in the Afghan culture. It can shut a soldier down."

Santos credits his own chief's initiation as the primary teacher for how to develop ANA soldiers.

"My transformation to chief was all about





overcoming discouragement,” said Santos. “I had it drilled into my head how to overcome being discouraged and motivating people who were discouraged. That has been very useful here.”

Regardless of their position, Sailors at Herat ETTs have made quite the impression on their ANA counterparts. Navy Seabee Construction Electrician 1st Class Kevin Harrison mentors 4/1 Kandak’s engineers.

“Harrison is a good man,” said ANA SFC Moneer Babadshah, 1st Sergeant 4/1 Kandak. “We have a lot of engineering mentors, but he is special. We don’t consider him just another American but an Afghan brother. He



is helpful because he is approachable.”

Sailors like Harrison, Santos, Torres, and Howell began their journey to Herat through the individual augmentee program that kicked off with two weeks of intensive field familiarization training at Camp Adelbury, Ind.. For some Sailors the training, which included topics like weapons familiarization, convoy procedures and combat lifesaving (advanced first aid), was brand new, but for a select few like Seabees and corpsmen, it served only as a refresher.

### ▲ Afghanistan is a predominantly

Islamic country, and that religious influence is witnessed throughout its newborn military. No matter what evolution is occurring, Afghan soldiers will stop and pray five times a day.

“What gives Seabees an advantage here is their warfare qualification program,” said Chief Storekeeper Jeff Close. “They get to go into the field, they go on humps, and they use all of the weapons we use here.”

Herat’s ETT has three such Sailors, Civil

### ▼ Afghanistan's vast tundra and

high-ridged mountains provide many obstacles for the visiting Americans, who have learned to appreciate the country's terrain for its offensive and defensive protection and stealthiness.



Engineering Corps LT Al Hutchinson, Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Stephen Murray, and Harrison.

On March 28th, that extra experience came in handy for Harrison and Murray.

The two Sailors, along with other American military personnel and their ANA counterparts, were attacked by anti-coalition members (ACM) with small arms, crew-served weapons, RPGs and mortars while delivering supplies to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Wolf.

Harrison returned fire – with the biggest gun he could find, one of four D-30 122mm *Howitzer* cannons.

According to a memorandum for the record, Harrison was part of convoy team four, which was directed by the convoy commander, Army Lt.Col. Boyd, to take an over watch position for teams one through three. After close air support was coordinated, Boyd directed team four to emplace one of the D-30 122mm *Howitzers* and engage the RPG and mortar fire coming from the village of

Tambah. Harrison, along with U.S. Army National Guard Maj. Patrick Swafford and Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Jones worked together to deliver five rounds downrange, which stopped the RPGs and mortars.

“Firing that *Howitzer* was intense,” said Harrison. “We worked as a team to get it ready to fire and it quieted their guns in a hurry.”

The drama didn't end there.

Three hours after the initial attack on the convoy, an ANA Light Tactical Vehicle (LTV) hit an Improvised Explosive Device (IED)





killing eight ANA soldiers and destroying the LTV just 500 meters beyond the village. Murray wasted little time, helping the survivors almost instantly.

"The IED ripped that truck to shreds," said Murray. "Some of the ANA soldiers were killed instantly, but we were able to save some of them."

The enemy wasn't done.


After the convoy arrived at FOB Wolf, ACM forces attacked the FOB with direct and indirect fire. The ETTs, just as they had been

trained to do, assumed their defensive positions and engaged the enemy. Official estimates place the number of enemy attackers at more than 100 with 70 of them being killed by coalition counter fire.

"Our ANA guys fought bravely," said Murray. "No one hesitated to attack the enemy. Not Army, not Navy, not the ANA."

Long before the ambush, Sailors had earned the respect of their American Army counterparts.

"My experience with Sailors," said Boyd,

"is that they just jump right into things. They'll stop long enough to ask how to do something, and then they just do it. They don't play the 'I'm in the Navy' card to get out of work. Hell, they're the first ones to volunteer. I've got no problems with Sailors in my unit. Send more." 

*Pinsky is a photojournalist for All Hands.*

#### Website Exclusive

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Story and photo by MCSN Derek R. Sanchez

# EVERYTHING BEGINS IN THE AM

Since the Wright brothers launched the first aircraft in Kitty Hawk, N.C., and the Navy introduced its first aircraft in 1911 and up to today, there has been a need for personnel with a unique understanding of aircraft structure and a knack for problem solving.

Aviation Structural Mechanic 2nd Class (AW) Philip Michael Sadler longed for such skills since the day he set foot into a Navy recruiting office almost eight years ago. Sadler has excelled in his work, proving himself a leader in the aviation structural mechanic community.

"It's my job to think on my feet and find solutions to problems that others find impossible," said Sadler. "And this includes keeping the aircraft in one piece."


AMs repair all the hydraulic units that raise or lower wings and rotors on an aircraft, maintain power systems that keep the aircraft alive, and

fabricate a metal skeleton to hold it together.

For Sadler, this is why he loves his career.

"Almost every component has my signature on it, and the lives aboard are resting in my hands," said Sadler.

Sadler's passion and drive for his position earned him Junior Sailor of the Quarter at his command, Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 3, a fleet replacement squadron that trains pilots and air crew on MH-60S *Knighthawk* rescue helicopters, so they are fully operable at their next duty station.

"My job is always changing," said Sadler. "It isn't the normal hustle and bustle of any other job; I see something different every day. I am responsible for the safety and well being of four air crew members and the aircraft they fly in. I love my job." 

*Sanchez is assigned to the Fleet Public Affairs Center, Pacific, San Diego.*

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## The Father of the American Navy

July 6, 2006, marks the 259th anniversary of the birth of John Paul Jones, the “Father of the American Navy.” He was born in poverty in 1747 in Arbigland, Scotland, and through his skills became a distinguished naval officer fighting for both the United States and Russia.

In Britain he is remembered as a pirate. Indeed, Benjamin Disraeli, an early biographer, wrote that the nurses of Scotland hushed their crying charges by the whisper of his name. In Holland, a Dutch song “Here Comes John Paul Jones, that fine fellow” is still sung by schoolchildren. He was awarded a gold sword and Order of Military Merit from Louis XVI for his exploits, but he was buried in an unmarked grave in France for more than a century.

Originally named John Paul, he went to sea at age 12, and his youth was adventure-filled. He was chief mate on a slave ship in 1766, but, disgusted with the work, soon quit. In 1769 he obtained command of *John*, a merchant ship that he captained in 1770. In 1773, while Jones was in command of the British merchant ship *Betsy* off Tobago, he killed the ringleader of an attempted mutiny in self-defense with his sword in a dispute over wages. To avoid trial he fled to America. In 1775 he was in Philadelphia, added Jones to his name and received a commission in the Continental Navy.

### Revolutionary War Hero

In 1777, Jones was given command of *Ranger*, fresh from the shipyard in Portsmouth, N.H. He sailed to France, then daringly took the war to the very shores of the British Isles. In 1778, he captured *Drake*, a British warship.

Later he was given another ship, an old French merchant ship, which he rebuilt and named *Bon Homme Richard* [Poor Richard], to honor Benjamin Franklin. He set out with a small fleet in the hope of meeting the British fleet returning from the Baltic Sea, but was disappointed until the cruise was nearly finished.

Finally on Sept. 23, 1779, he encountered a British merchant ship, convoyed by the frigate *Serapis* and a smaller warship. Despite the superiority of *Serapis*, Jones did not hesitate, and the battle, which began at sunset and ended more than three and a half hours later by moonlight, is one of the most memorable in naval history.

Jones sailed close in, to cut the advantage of *Serapis*, and battle lashed *Bon Homme Richard* to the British ship. Both ships were heavily damaged. *Serapis* was afire in at least 12 different places. The hull of *Bon Homme Richard* was pierced, her decks ripped, her hold was filling with water and unchecked fires were destroying her; yet when the British captain asked if Jones was ready to surrender, the answer came proudly, “Sir, I have not yet begun to fight.” When *Serapis* surrendered, Jones and his men boarded her while his own vessel sank. He was much honored in France for the victory but received little recognition in the United States.



U.S. Navy Photo

John Paul Jones

### Later Life

In 1788, Jones was asked by Catherine the Great to join the Russian navy; he accepted on the condition that he become a rear admiral.

His command against the Turks in the Black Sea was successful, but political intrigue prevented him getting due credit. In 1789 he was discharged from the Russian navy and returned to Paris. He died in 1792 in the midst of the French Revolution, without receiving the commission that Jefferson had procured for him to negotiate with the dey of Algiers concerning American prisoners.

Although he is today generally considered among the greatest of American naval heroes and the founder of American naval tradition, his grave was forgotten until the U.S. Ambassador to France, Horace E. Porter, discovered it in 1905. After the expenditure of much of his own time and money, Porter arranged for the remains to be moved to Annapolis, Md., where John Paul Jones has been enshrined in a crypt at the U.S. Naval Academy since 1913. ❧





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- ADM Mike Mullen  
Chief of Naval Operations

